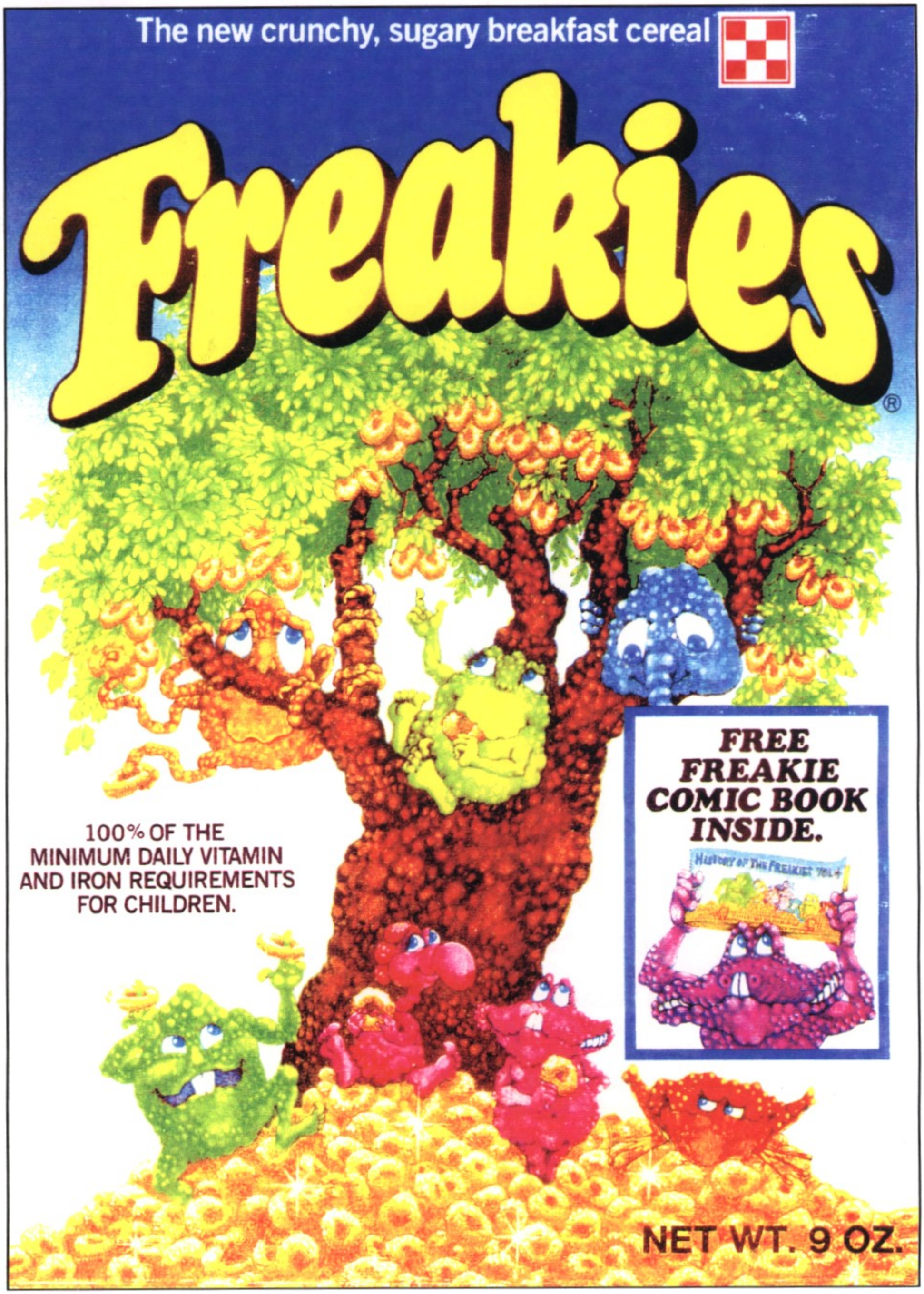
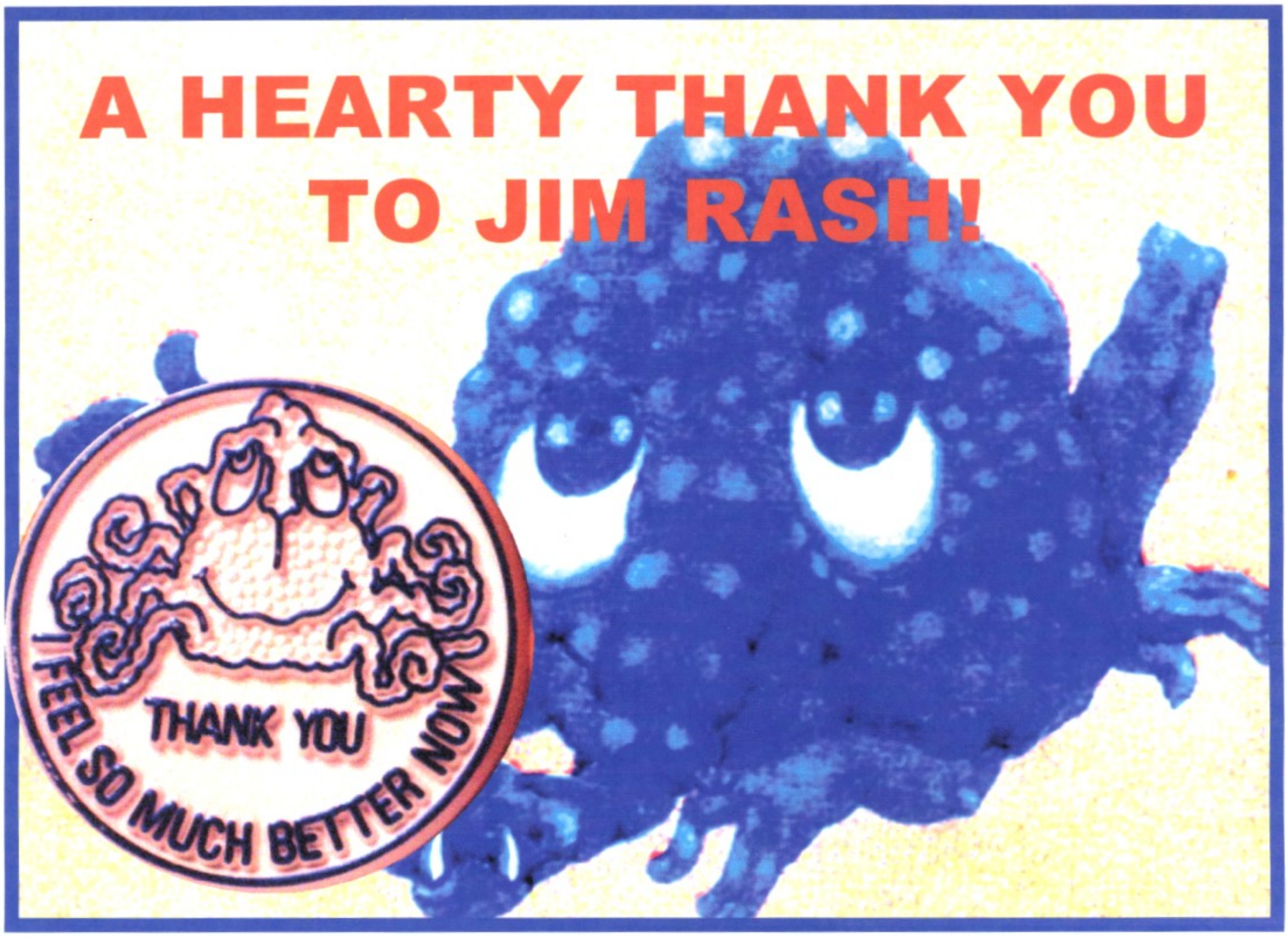
FREAKIE MAGNET 16





FREAKIE MAGNET ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS:

SEND $5

To keep receiving Freakie Magnet, send $5 cash wrapped in paper to:

KEVIN MEISNER
21 GLEN CRAG PLACE
UNCASVILLE, CT 06382

Back issues available as follows:

#2 (Cocoa Freakies) - $7	#7 (Freakies) - $8	#12 (Freakies/R&L) - $5
#3 (Fruity Freakies) - $7	#8 (Wheaties/Quisp) - $6	#13 (Moonstones) - $5
#4 (Cap'n Crunch) - $7	#9 (Wacky Packages) - $10	#14 (Monsters III) - $5
#5 (Monster Cereals) - $10	#10 (Monsters II) - $10	#15 (Quake) - $5
#6 (World Cereals) - $7	#11 (Cap'n Crunch II) - $6	#16 (Freakies/R&L II) - $5

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

FREAKIE MAGNET SIXTEEN

EBAY Impact on Cereal Collecting

Zachary eating . . . pancakes?

I've been reading the Ad Character News every month and listening to Steve Veltman discuss ebay. There is no question that ebay has transformed cereal collecting from a very small niche community with a limited number of hard found, fought and bought boxes and prizes to a global collecting community with a wide and seemingly endless variety of boxes and prizes available every day. The result has been a significant and steady drop in prices for common cereal prizes (across the board - and many prizes that were not common yesterday are common today) and a marked drop in price for ALL but the more rare cereal boxes.

The impact has been felt by all of us "old timers" who have boxes and prizes in our collections and in inventory that are no longer worth what we paid for them. However, for me ebay has been an extremely positive development. Gone are the days of relying on a few hard-working and well connected collector/dealers - bless them for the role they played before ebay - they have been displaced by my home pc and ebay.

Jacob, eating an appropriate breakfast!

Ebay provides many opportunities for today's collectors to get every imaginable cereal box and prize at a much lower price than before. I've watched Monster Cereal boxes, especially the pouring milk and holding spoon varieties, plummet in price - a few years ago people were paying $150 to $200 for Booberry pouring milk and holding spoon, now you're lucky if you can get $75. Freakies prizes are incredibly affordable. A good example of a "correction" in the market is Freakies boats. Once we had to pay $32 for a boat, now they are blowing out at $5 each! Imagine the fun I am having buying dozens of boats at $5 each? Freakies figures have remained at a stable $10 each, and magnets have even gone up in price due to their popularity. Even rare items like fruithats, sew on patches, fun dots and wall clocks have appeared in recent months - of course these items have commanded higher prices.

If you think Freakies collectors are having a good time, go to ebay and see that tons of Monster Cereals, Quisp, Quake, Quangaroos, Cap'n, Moonstones, Grins, a wide, wide variety of R&L (directly from Australia) and much more is out there every day at reasonable prices. It's Charlie eats the Chocolate Factory for all of us collectors today.

The only guys who are hurting from ebay are the guys who amassed cereal boxes and prizes in the late 80's and early 90's who were hoping to cash out big in the future. One such character, who paid high prices for his boxes, has been putting these boxes up for sale at a formerly reasonable retail price, to find that no one is bidding on his boxes because his prices are oh, so two years ago. Others have been more philosophical about the whole thing, and are happy to keep their boxes, or they are thinking that this huge influx of boxes and prizes into the hobby won't last. As for me, I'm buying low. If the supply dries up, I and the others out there buying will have the goods. If not, then more toys for me!

NEXT ISSUE: PEBBLES BOXES, THE ASTRONIT AWARD, COOL CEREAL MODELS, MORE GNARLY, MORE DOWNUNDER, MORE R&L, FREAKIES (of course), AND, YOU GUESSED IT, MORE!

Keep your letters, emails, pictures, and $5 bills rolling in! Thanks and ENJOY! -KEV

The Freakie Magnet©2000 by Kevin Meisner is a Cereal Fanzine for everyone! Address all inquiries to: ***Freakie Magnet, 21 Glen Crag Place, Uncasville, CT 06382.*** Phone: 860-848-2050. Email: Meisner65@aol.com. Single Issues may be obtained for $5.00. Back issues available, prices increase as the numbers dwindle. Allow 4 weeks for delivery. The "Freakies" name, characters and logo are copyrighted by Jackie End and are used with permission.

MAIL FROM THE INTERNET:

Hi Kevin,
I remember that you mentioned the possibilities of doing Monster Cereal videos. Just wondered if anything has come of that yet. Also, I wondered if you know of any

king crater (w/crown) which is different, that i have. and i also have 7 of the 8 rock band pieces that i can take pics of also. all this might be easier when i get a digital camera, and easy to send you a jpeg. good luck with the zine. all the best.
brian - reeceetigr@aol.com

CRUNCHY NUGGETS

videotapes with some of the other cool 60s/70s cereal ads: G&s&G&L, Mr. Waffles, Moonstones, Sir Grapefellow & Baron von Redberry, Cap'n Crunch, Smackin' Bros., Hoots, Crunchy Nuggets, Quisp/Quake/ Quangaroos/King Vitaman, etc. I had a few cool finds recently: For $35, I bought a lot of 8 early 1980s boxes, including Waffelos with the Wacky Pack offer (missing coupon & POP) & Count Chocula pouring milk with the smelly stickers offer. One of my best finds yet! I also got a Mr. Waffles hand puppet and two different Mr. Waffles comics. Aside from what's on Dan Goodsell's page, I'd never seen anything from Mr. Waffles before, so I was psyched about these. Last, I paid way more than I can afford for a Sir Grapefellow box. I'd wanted one for a long time & it was the first one that I'd ever seen for sale, so I broke down. (Yeah, it was Scott Bruce's on eBay). Well, anyway, I'd better run...have a great evening!
Andrew Yoder

Yo Andrew - I'd check with Mr. Dimock for videos. I have made no progress on the Monster Cereals video project since no one seems to have any commercials. I think three exist. Can anyone help?

hey
just got #15...it's great! the pictures of all the quake boxes look outstanding, and the robb zenner article was quite insightful. same plan for the next issue (send $5 now, get #16 later)? time to go page through it again...let me know when you have more freakies boxes for sale!
David Dowd

Yep the rulz are the same - you get an issue, send me $5 cash! Simple and efficient. Sorry no Freakies boxes for sale at this time, but I'm buying!

kevin. hello. i was going to email you tonight about receiving the newest issue #15. and here i get 4 emails from you. really like fm 15.....just wish there were more pages of quake boxes or even premiums. of course i would say this...i collect quisp & quake! as to articles for the magnet, keep me in mind when you do a quisp piece (and doug mark also). and i can do something on the japanese crater critters. the japanese set (supposedly) came out before the R&L ones did and are different, even though they look the same. plus i have one of the rare ones....my friend in japan has the other one. i took pics of his awhile ago, but i haven't developed the film yet. i don't have a pic of mine, but i can take one, and of the japanese

Thanks Brian I definitely would like to hear more about the Japanese Crater Critters! Quisp boxes issue in the future, waiting for lasers and info.

Kev, I got all your emails and am excited about a strong showing of support from the cereal fans out there. I am really happy you liked my idea and are actively surveying FM readers to get a tally of original Freakie boxes. Put my entry down as having 1 high grade FREAKIES MINI-MAGNET box and 1 cut-up but complete FRUITY FREAKIES FLIP-N-FLY box. This info will be fun to know and helpful in trying to complete a collection. We'll talk soon....see ya

JAMES ELSENPETER
MPLS, MN.

Anyone who has Freakies boxes, please send me a list as we are trying to tally the total number of each variety that are out there... If you have already responded to this request, thanks!

Received your email. Loved the new issue, the printing job was great.
Roland

Thanks Uncle Roland!

Hello Kev! My FM friend! How are you? I got the FM Today! WOW, Thank you so much for your kindness! FM #15 is very cool! Your Quake boxes are amazing ... WOW!!! I'm very big happy! I also was surprised. . .Sugar Chex "casper" Box! I want it! If you can get the box, please help me!!! I am also looking for "fruit brute" vinyl doll MIB! I can pay $380.00
Thank you, Kentax Henmi,
211-31 Chitose,Takatuku
Kawasaki,Kanagawa 2130022
Japan

Hey Kentaro! Glad to see you've got email! Very efficient way of communication from Japan! Hopefully one of our readers can help you find some of the things you like! And thanks for the drawing, it appears in the classifieds section this time!

ANNOUNCEMENT! JAMES KOVAL HAS MOVED TO HOLLYWOOD. HIS NEW ADDRESS IS:
JAMES KOVAL
APT 305
5826 CARLTON WAY
HOLLYWOOD CA 90028-6646
PHONE: 323-461-9796/24 HOURS
E-MAIL: JAYKOVAL@AOL.COM

Kevin --
I received issues 14 and 15 just fine. Thanks much. It feels good to be caught up again. I didn't know you switched to staple binding. The new format looks good, with clear crisp pictures. Are you doing it all on a home printer? I didn't realize until you sent that note a few weeks back that you almost stopped doing the Magnet. That would be a tragedy. I feel odd that my feature story was in one of the two "bad" issues. But I know, it was printing that made them so awful for you. Yeah, I remember thinking at the time how poor the pictures came out. I think you mentioned that issue 16 is nearly ready. I'd love to be on the list of people who automatically get mailed new issues. You know I'll send you a check as soon as each one comes.
Troy

Hi Troy! Yes, when I moved to CT I lost my old printer in D.C. Also, the mag was not making enough money to sustain the great printing as

The Cool & The Weird - foreign cereal bags courtesy Randall Phillip.

before. By now we're doing better and more people are coming back to the magazine. Regarding that feature article, how about writing me another? I can guarantee the printing will be great because, yes, I am printing at home! Thanks for writing!

hi kev ! loved the latest quake issue- great color to go with a nice overview of the characters history. the quake "help! save me" box sure is a sad sight to behold. one of my earliest cereal memories is staying over at a friends house in 1970 and eating quake for breakfast the next morning ! i believe the box we munched from was the cowboy box which has quake shown from the chest up looking up at his logo. i remember this so clearly its as if i have a photo of it ! anyhow, i also liked the custom monster boxes made by kevin wahl- pretty cool. say- have you seen the new quisp display put out by quaker? i scored one here in little 'ol duluth , minnesota recently -although i had to buy the remaining 28 boxes of cereal to get it ! enjoyed mikals article as usual- but i cant believe he didn't mention " yummy mummy" as one of his 80's favorites ! as a final note-i want you to know that we all appreciate the hard work and dedication you deliver to your fine publication. looking forward to issue # 500. chow brother. - robb zenner superior , wi

Thanks Robb!

REGULAR MAIL:

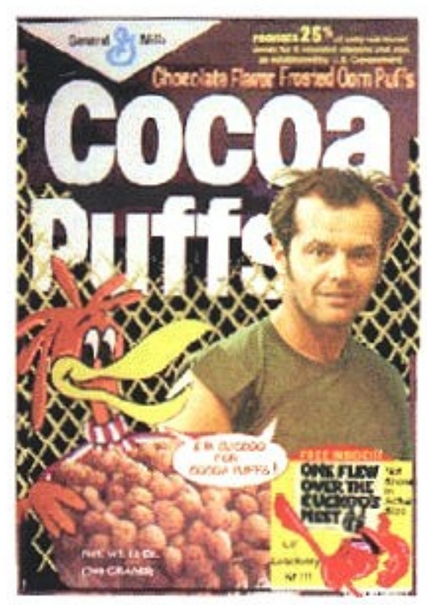
Dear Kevin-
Thanks for another great issue of Freakie Magnet. Thanks even more for the original copy of Freakie Magnet #1! I was looking forward to whatever version of #1 you might send me; needless to say, I was delighted by what I found in the envelope - you really made my week! FM#15 was as entertaining and informative as any. Once again, the color was fantastic - my 19 month old daughter now knows who Quake is, thanks to the nice, bright cover and the illustrations accompanying your article. Robb Zenner's article was interesting; it answered a few questions I've had about the hobby since getting involved two years ago. I'm looking forward to other, similar articles in the future. I enjoyed your editorial, too - your last sentence seems to sum it up for me. (It was also a reminder that I *still* don't have a full set of Freakies cars, to play with or display! Considering all the time I spend on eBay (thanks to you, I might add), I should really take care of that.) It was about at this point that I read the letters pages and saw that I actually had a letter printed in a Freakie Magnet. Cool! As I've read letters in other issues, I've thought, "Wow, all these other people like this stuff, too. It's a community of Freakies fans and cereal collectors." Now I feel I'm "officially" a part of that community. Thanks, Kevin. If both the Freakie Magnet and I are around when you hit issue #50, I'll be there. Thanks again, and keep up the fantastic work! -Mark Best, Bloomington, IL.

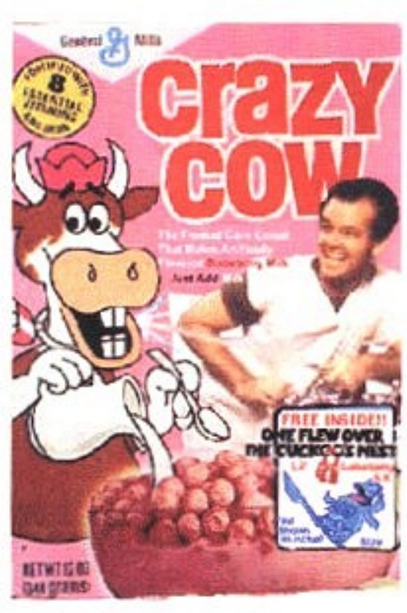
Thanks for this cool letter, Mark! I'm glad you liked seeing your letter printed and that Freakie Magnet is doing what it is intended to do - bring the cereal collectors together. Folks, I want you to know that I appreciate all your letters and pictures and things that you send in. If you have sent me a picture, article or letter that has not yet appeared in the Magnet it is due to space restrictions, and keep watching for your stuff to pop up in the future. Each issue has at least one piece of artwork or article that has been kicking around here for a year or two. Please don't take it personally if your stuff does not appear, just contact me to let me know and I'll make sure your cool submission is located and printed. This fanzine has always been by collectors for collectors and I intend to keep it that way! -Kevin

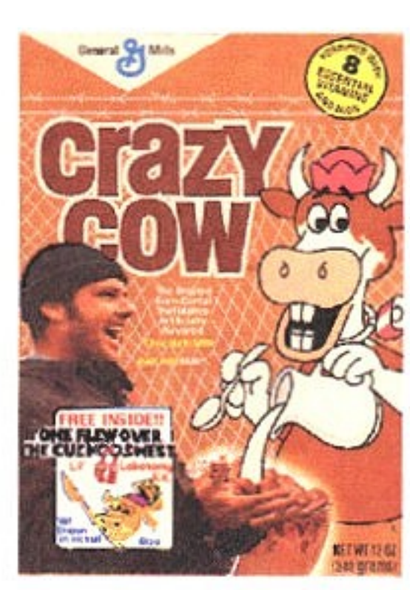
Anybody remember Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman (it was a tv show)? Well, here she is, and look what's for breakfast! This photo is included in "The Mary Hartman Story," a 1976 book by Daniel Lockwood. Thanks to Oscar Moreno for sending this!

The Rarely Seen "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" Big Promotion from the late '70's....

Friends - watch for lots more from Kevin Wahl in upcoming issues! BIG surprises coming! -Kev



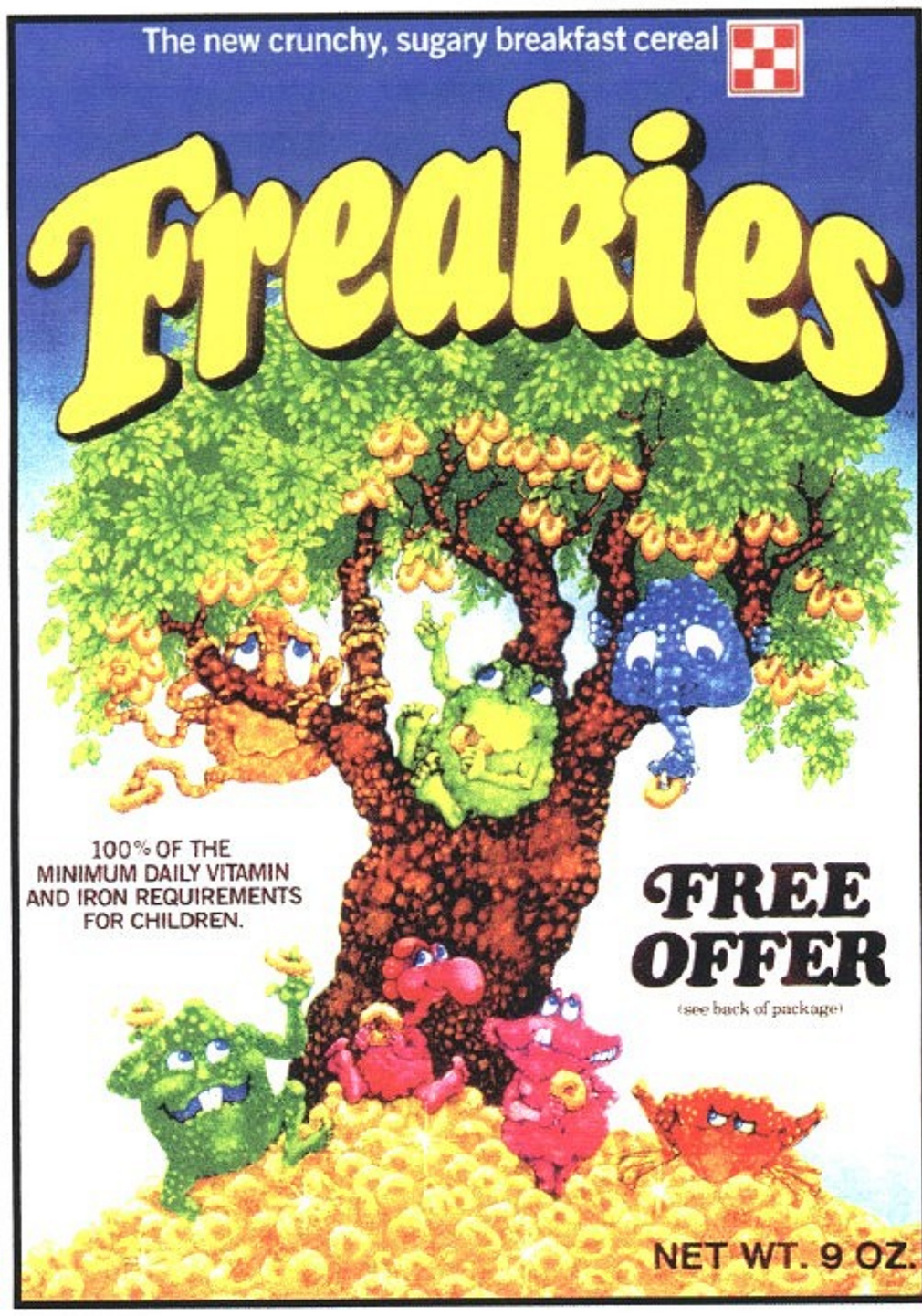




Kevin,
I can't wait until your website is done being under construction . . . but in hopes also that you continue the Magnet! Actually I am waiting for a Fruity Freakies mug! (located in Toy Shop). I'll send a pic for show and tell. Take care for now! -Jim Merlo, Midlothian, IL p.s. Did you ever do anything with the Quisp, Quake and Freakies artwork I did for you? Just wondering, hope you enjoyed!

Hi Jim! Sad to say that the new Freakie Magnet website is dead. I had to choose between one or the other and I chose the printed Freakie Magnet. My tripod site is up and running and we will be updating it some time soon. The real value of it is that it shows pictures of each issue and gives ordering info! Wow, it's been a long time since I have heard anyone mention Toy Shop! I got started in this thanks to Toy Shop way back in 1994. Regarding the artwork you sent, I believe the web designer has it (in Virginia). I'll be getting a lot of stuff back from him and will be printing it in the future. Thanks again! - Kevin

THE RAREST FREAKIES BOXES

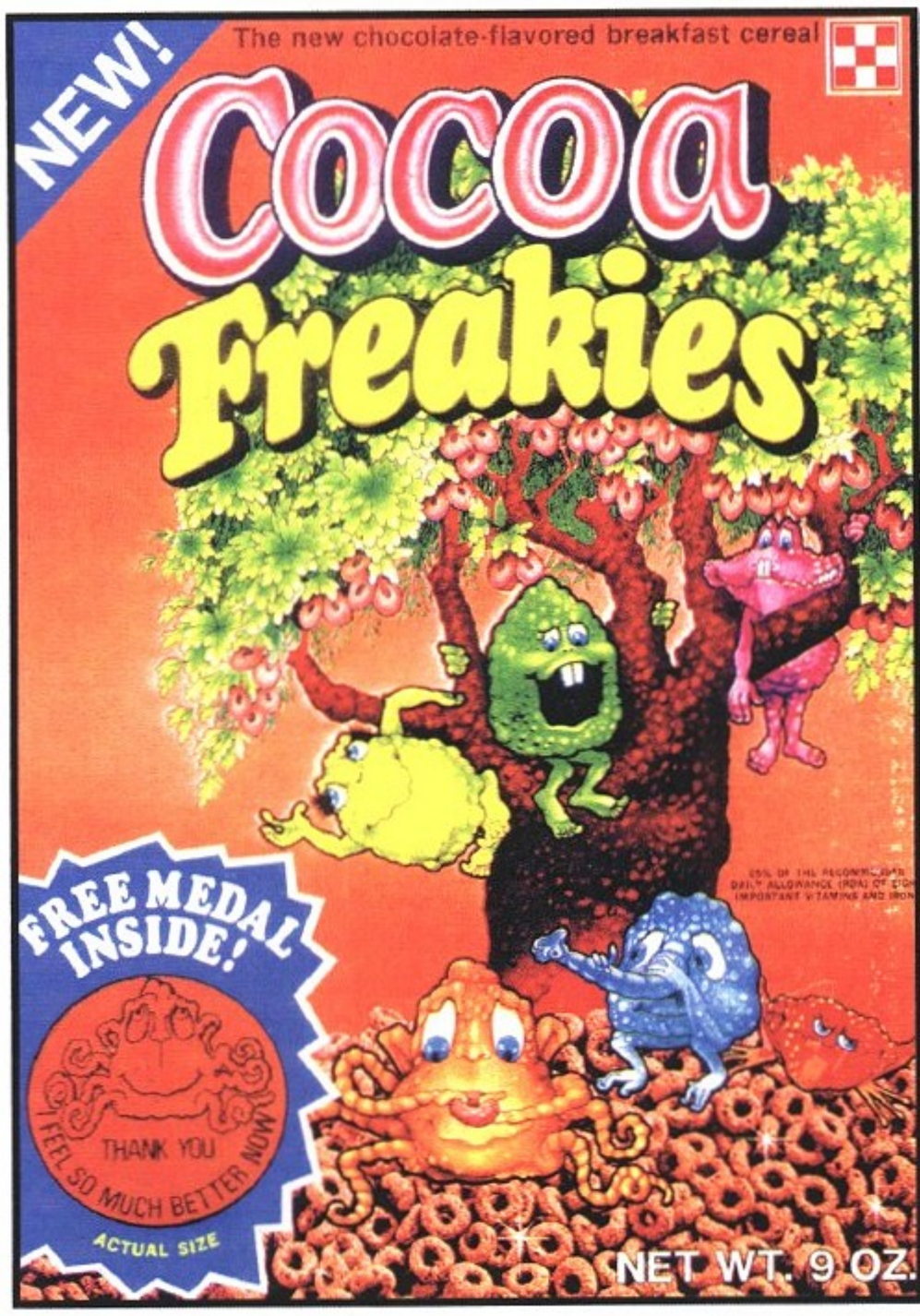


The cereal hobby has been described as a "nostalgia craze," a hobby concerned with bringing the past to life in the present, about recovering moments of innocence and fun, moments lost to time. And while people do spend a lot of time recalling the past (and forecasting the future), the fact is, like a needle on a record, we experience only here and now.

The past is gone and the future a mere potentiality. The secret to fully experiencing our existence is to bring our consciousness, our awareness, into the here and now. While we may have enjoyed the past, the fact is that the cereal hobby is all about enjoying the items in the present moment. We need not pine away for yesterday, for what we have, we have here and now. This is why it is important to recover the items of yesterday that you would like to have and enjoy, today.

This revelation means that I don't have to feel bad that the Freakies are "gone," or work hard to bring them back. They exist, here and now, right before my eyes. I have all the Freakies I could ever want, far more than I had as a child.

The following pictorial information is presented for your enjoyment. These boxes are among the rarest Freakies boxes in existence, documenting a history that many of us had been unaware of. While many of these items were regional, don't feel bad that you didn't have them before, because you have them NOW...



HAMHOSE FEELS BETTER!

[or "Now there's a chocolate-flavored Freakies cereal, too!"]

The Freakies were carrying on as usual, when it became apparent that something was wrong with Hamhose. He just wasn't himself. He even stopped speaking. Except to say the word "chocolate" once in a while.

It was then that Snorkeldorf, (who is probably Hamhose's best friend), went to BossMoss. "BossMoss", he said. "I'd give up all my mirrors, if only Hamhose was happy again." BossMoss called a meeting of the Freakies and told them they had to find a way to make Hamhose feel better. So they put their heads together (which isn't easy for Freakies) and thought.

Suddenly, a light bulb flashed over Snorkeldorf's head! (That means he had a brilliant idea.) "I've got it! I've got it!" he said. "Well, for Goodness Sake", said Goody-Goody, "don't get any of it on me!" "No," Snorkeldorf said, "I've got the answer!" The Freakies were so happy they jumped for joy. "All we've got to do" he said, "is grow a chocolate-flavored Freakies tree. Then Hamhose can have all the rich, dark chocolate flavor he wants. And I'm going to do it." And he did. He grew a beautiful, chocolately-brown Freakies tree. And when it was ripe, he rushed the first fresh cereal over to Hamhose.

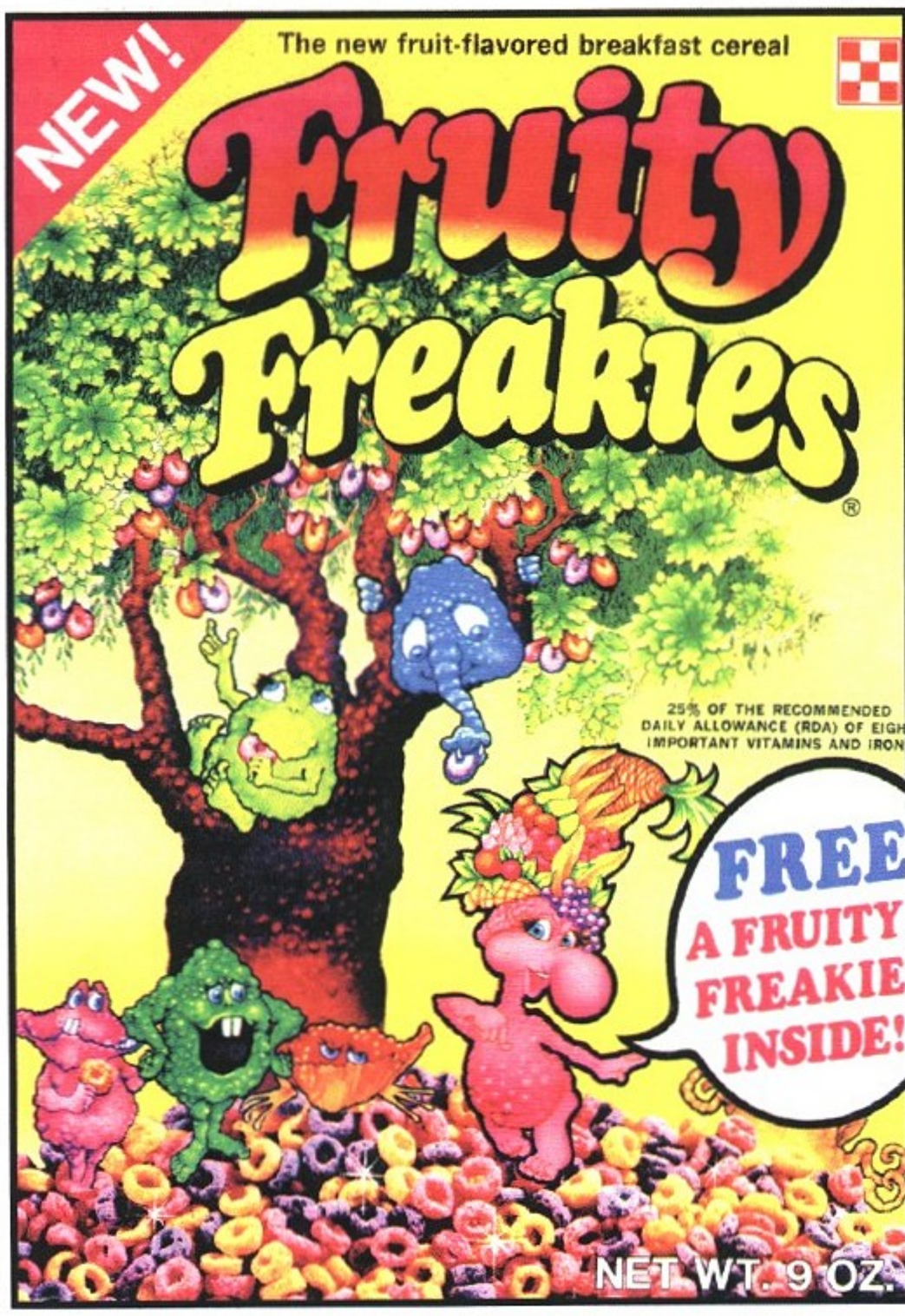
Hamhose munched quietly for a while. Then slowly but surely a wonderful smile marched across his face. "I feel . . . um . . . so much better now", he said. And you could tell just by looking at him, that he did.

Anyway, Hamhose was so grateful to Snorkeldorf, that he gave him a very special medal. It was made of Freakium. (A very special metal.) And had a beautiful portrait bf Hamhose smiling, along with some engraving at the bottom which said: "Thank You. I feel so much better now."

Now, of course, Snorkeldorf will never part with this magnificent medal. But he has arranged for everyone to have a free copy of it. (There's one right inside this box.) Because, as Snorkeldorf says: "When you can see Hamhose smiling any time you want, it makes you feel so much better."

There is a FREE Freakie Medal inside this box.

© 1973 RALSTON PURINA CO.



"THE DAY GOODY–GOODY LOST HER MARBLES"

or "How come there's a fruit-flavored Freakies cereal, too?"

ACTUAL PHOTOGRAPH . . . taken on the day Goody Goody lost her marbles.

A long, long time ago (two weeks to be exact), the Freakies were having breakfast and discussing world affairs when Goody-Goody came out with a startling statement. "Fruit!" she said. "Fruit?" they asked. "Fruit!" she answered, adjusting the bon voyage basket perched atop her head. Perplexed, BossMoss asked her to explain. "I like fruit," she said. "Why else would I wear this dumb basket of fruit on my head?" BossMoss said it was true. Either Goody-Goody liked fruit an awful lot, or she had lost her marbles. Because, as he put it, "Nobody but a fruitcake wears fruit on their head."

To which Gargle replied: "Of course! How stupid of us! It's the old Chocolate/Vanilla Theory. Or, in this case, the old Plain/Fruit-Flavored-Theory. You must have a choice. I must have a choice. They must have a choice. We must ALL have a choice."

To which everyone replied: "Huh?".

To which Gargle replied: "Don't you see, fellow Freakies? It's all so simple. Beloved as our original Freakies cereal is, we all deserve a choice. We all deserve the right to eat a fruit-flavored Freakies cereal whenever we choose! And I, being the most educated of our little group, being the one who has read the entire encyclopedia from cover to cover . . . I shall take it upon myself to develop a seed that when planted, will grow into a lovely tree bearing fruit-flavored Freakies cereal. And all the world shall be a stage . . . and all the Freakies merely players with a choice of what to have for breakfast!"

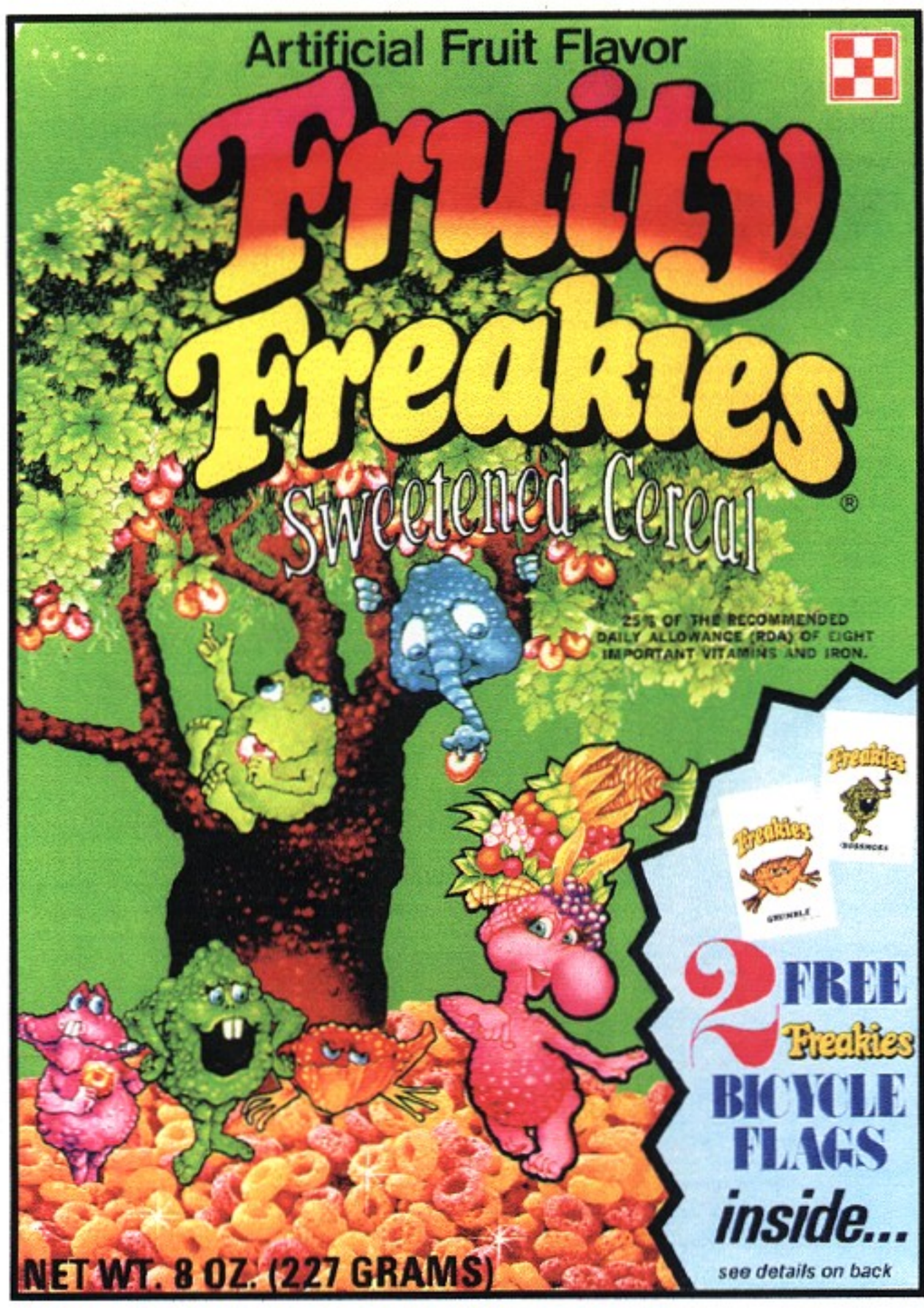
And so it was. And so it is. That today, the world may have a choice. Crunchy, sugary, original Freakies cereal, which is loaded with vitamins. Or, new crunchy, sugary Fruity Freakies cereal, which is also loaded with vitamins.

P.S. As you probably already know, there is a wonderful lifelike statuette of Goody-Goody wearing her bon voyage basket, packed free inside this box. This is the Freakies' way of reminding you that people who wear fruit on their heads, should always explain why they're doing a dumb thing like that.

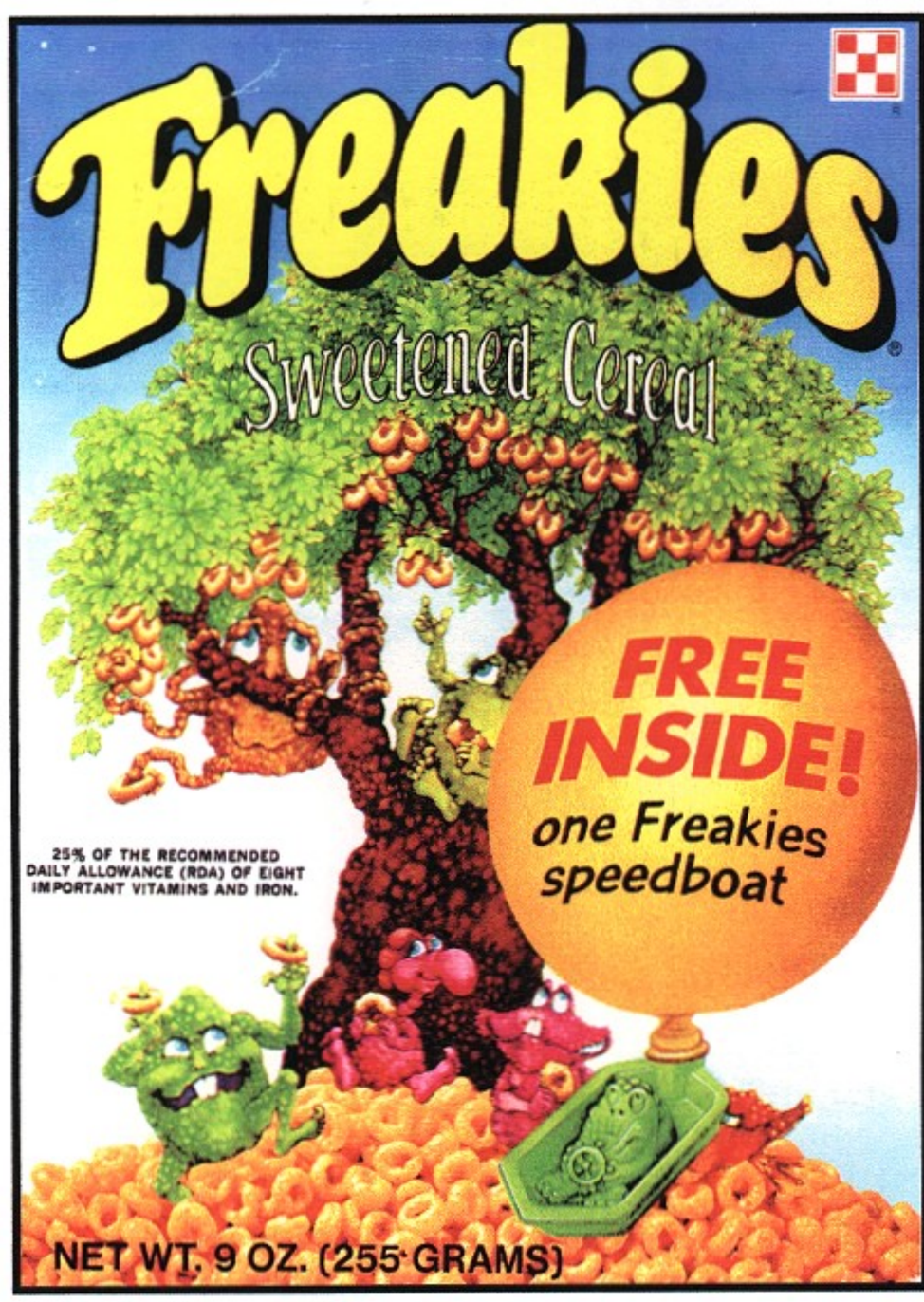
ACTUAL SIZE ▶

FREE GOODY–GOODY FREAKIE INSIDE!

© 1973 RALSTON PURINA CO.

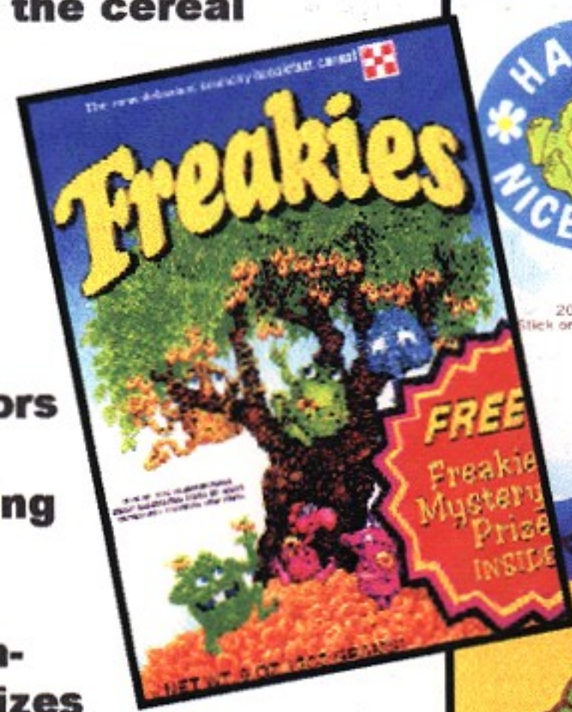

Artificial Fruit Flavor
Fruity Freakies
Sweetened Cereal
25% OF THE RECOMMENDED DAILY ALLOWANCE (RDA) OF EIGHT IMPORTANT VITAMINS AND IRON.
2 FREE Freakies BICYCLE FLAGS inside...
see details on back
NET WT. 8 OZ. (227 GRAMS)

2 FREE Freakies BICYCLE FLAGS inside...
FRUITY FREAKIES
Collect all seven of your favorite Freakies characters. Put the flags on the back of your bicycle seat, handle bars, wheel spokes or place on a stick and let them blow in the wind as you ride. Make up different ways to use these seven lovable characters inside or outside the home.
Collect all 7 flags


Freakies
Sweetened Cereal
FREE INSIDE!
one Freakies speedboat
25% OF THE RECOMMENDED DAILY ALLOWANCE (RDA) OF EIGHT IMPORTANT VITAMINS AND IRON.
NET WT. 9 OZ. (255 GRAMS)

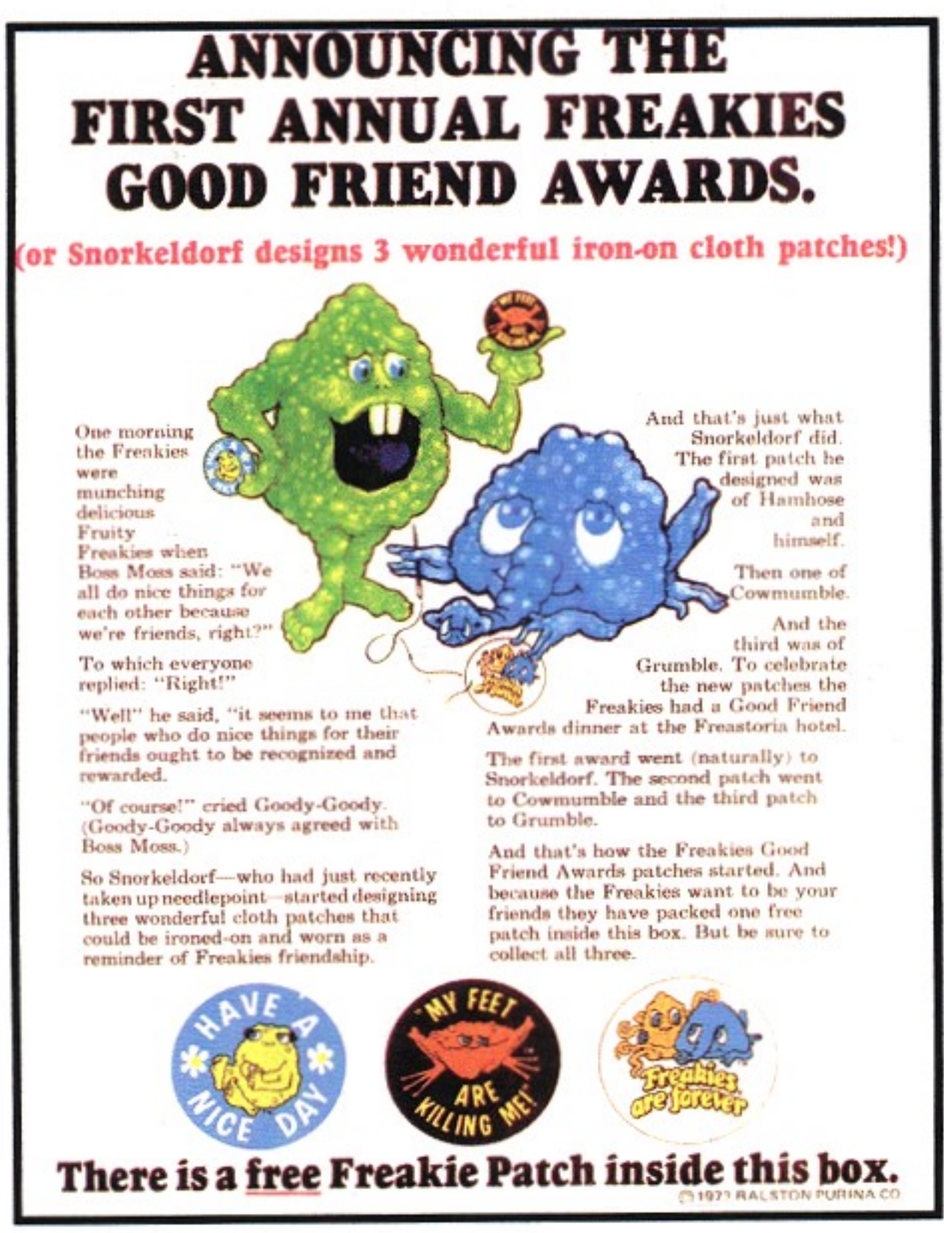
What's almost as neat as a treat of Freakies cereal?
A fleet of Freakies . . .
Freakies speedboats, that is . . . zipping along on a lake or a pond, a bathtub, or a very large cereal bowl.
What amazing little vessels they are! Powered by your wind, they race across the water on even a still day. Each one comes with its own Freakie skipper (who just sort of lies there and enjoys the ride) and its own power source. You have to fill the "sails," of course . . . and the better you blow, the better they go.
When you've gotten together a fleet of 'em (there are seven different ones, and there's one in every Freakies cereal box) you and your Freakie friends can hold your own regatta almost anywhere there's water.
Whether this box holds your first, your seventh, or your fifty-seventh boat, open it up, haul out the craft, report to the skipper . . . and let 'er blow!
INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Stretch the balloon.
2. Attach balloon to air chamber.
3. Blow up balloon through hole at bottom of air chamber and pinch off air at balloon neck.
4. Holding balloon neck, set boat gently into water and release.
For best results, keep balloon dry.

Back in 1994 when I re-started in the cereal hobby, there were a number of mysteries left in the Freakies Universe. While Scott Bruce had located Jackie End and had barely interviewed her for his Flake Magazine, (thanks for the "grrr-eat" lead, Scott!) and a number of the "old timer" collectors like Duane Dimock and Dan Goodsell had cereal boxes detailing a number of common premiums (figures, magnets, cars, boats, planes, fruity patches, fruity flip-n-flys, etc.), the origin of certain prizes and their corresponding boxes was still a mystery.



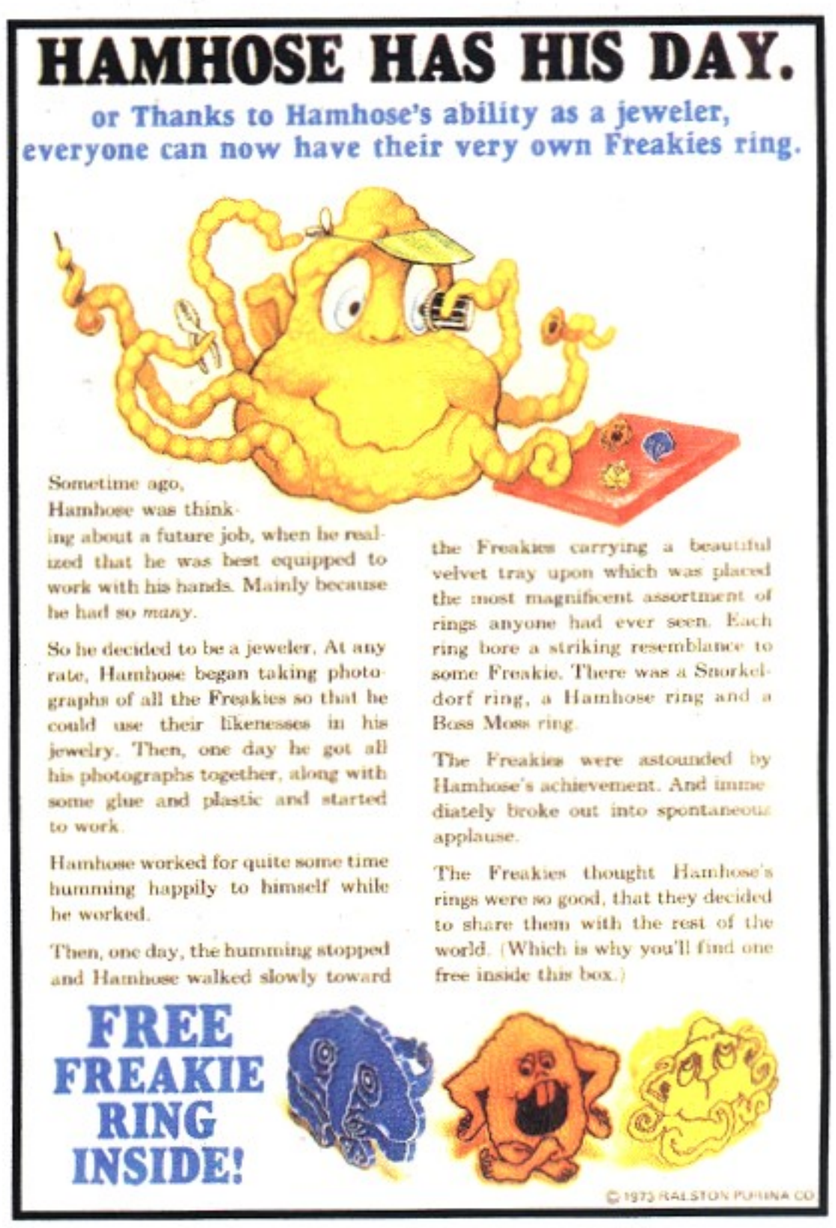
Thanks to the dedication and energy of the old timers and certain "newer" collectors, since 1994 we have made many exciting cereal box discoveries. Most of these rediscovered boxes were regional test market boxes, thus they are rarer as fewer were produced and saved.

Early on, Freakies hero Duane Dimock sent me an image of a Freakies "Mystery Prize" box, with a bunch of rare premiums on the back! Then, in 1995, the meeting between myself and creator Jackie End yielded boxes that were not in circulation at that time: the Freakies mailaway poster box, the Freakies comics box, the Fruity Freakies fruithat box, and the one and only Cocoa Freakies box. Also recovered from Jackie was an image of the Freakies rings box back and the Freakies circle patches box back. Just last year Ed Wentzel appeared on the scene with the Fruity Freakies bicycle flags box and the alternate Freakies boats box. Ed is one of the only collectors known who saved his Freakies boxes when he was a kid!



A few mysteries remain: no details exist for the Freakies Clock, Fun Dots, Rubber Freakies (small and large) or Sayings Magnets. While I believe that the Freakies rings came in Freakies, and that the circle patches came in Fruity Freakies, this is speculation, as only box backs exist. I guess a few mysteries remain...

KEVIN



Collecting R&L Premiums Part II

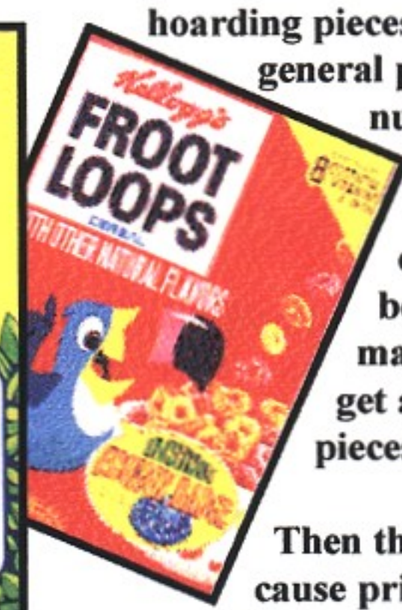
By: Mike Speth

Recently I've seen a great increase in the prices for R&L premiums and I am at a loss to explain why. Although there is a reason some pieces and sets are harder to find, most are relatively abundant. With perseverance a collector should be able to obtain the desired pieces without having to mortgage their home to get them. I would like to share some of my observations collecting R&L premiums in the hopes that it will give other collectors pause to think before spending massive sums of money to complete their sets. Finally I'd like to provide some guidance on "reasonable costs" when selling or buying R&L premiums.

In Craig Hall's book "Australian Breakfast Cereal Toy Premiums," on page #4 he writes: "Based upon what is known of R&L production numbers, it can be estimated that any given series after 1966 may have had up to 5 million pieces produced. For an eight character series, such as Crater Critters, this would equate to over 600,000 pieces for each character." But it is still possible to place some series into the Rare, Scarce, and Common categories due to the fact some individual pieces and sets are much harder to come by than others. This is due to the number produced, number surviving and in what condition, also how widely available they were originally. Not all series were distributed on a massive scale.

Since the R&L plastic-manufacturing company was located in Melbourne, Australia, the greatest number of series were available there. In Canada and the United States some series were quite abundant while others never appeared in cereal boxes. I do not have enough information about other countries where R&L premiums were distributed but they are known to have been in Mexico, Japan, South Africa, and parts of Europe.

Some sets are simple and inexpensive to complete like the Daffy Dogs. There are only eight different figures in the set and they were distributed in many countries and in multiple cereal packages. Others sets are harder to complete because there are lots of figures in the set and many collectors are holding onto multiples. Funny Fringes, Toolie Birds and AstroNits were all widely distributed however to complete a set you need to collect 15 different Fringes, 16 Tooly's, and 20 Nits. Still other sets are just hard to locate unless you're in the right area. The Neptune series was not distributed in the United States (although it made it into Canada) and it's a very cool set with 15 different pieces. Lots of collectors are hoarding pieces for color variations and general purposes and this reduces the number available to the collecting population. Sets like the Funny Fringes are sometimes difficult to complete. Not because they are rare but because many other collectors are trying to get a limited number of good pieces.



Then there are the other factors that cause price and scarcity increases. The first is condition. Some series seem to receive more wear than others do. For instance Funny Fringes are abundant with missing or broken loops and the put-together sets are notorious for having lost parts. This of course makes fewer of the "mint" pieces available for collections. Since every collector desires to have perfect pieces to display, these "mint" condition pieces in the high-wear categories tend to get higher prices than "mint" pieces in series that have abundant distribution.

For all the poor condition abundant pieces out there, there seem to be a few that are harder and more difficult to locate than any others. They are Starter Mushroom (Veggie Sports series), the King Crater and Upsy-Downsy figures from the Crater Critter series. Two things make these figures harder to find in "mint" condition. The first is that they are from very desirable sets that many collectors want. And the second reason they are so rare is because they have removable pieces. By "removable pieces" you may substitute the phrase "easily lost". In the case of Starter Mushroom there is a tiny gun the figure holds up in one hand. With King Crater and Upsy-Downsy each figure has a removable hat that always seems to be missing. Or in the case of King Crater, broken.

As a note about the designation of "mint" solid figures, I do not place any more value on a "Mint in Package" (MIP) figure than a "Mint"

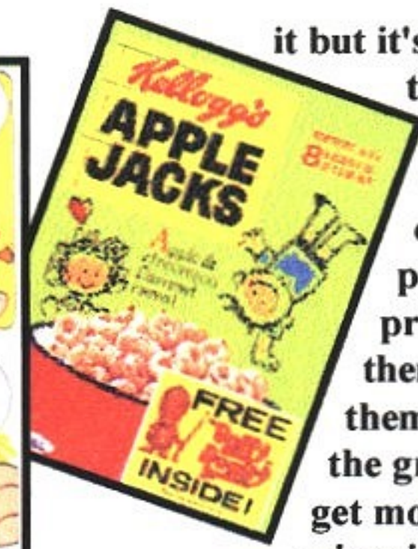
condition figure that has been removed from the cellophane wrapper. Some collectors do feel that a figure still in the original packaging is more desirable than one taken out. My opinion is that if I needed the figure for my display it looks a whole lot better when you can view it outside the wrapper. Because of that I have opened almost all the "MIP" premiums I've ever gotten.

However, this same philosophy does not necessarily carry over to the MIP put-together toys. The put-together premiums are a completely different level of item when you collect them. Yes, I do take most of my put-together toys out of the cellophane and build them for display. But I also display them in the cellophane because, well, they just look so cool sitting on the frame unbuilt. Also when you have a put-together toy on the frame "MIP" then you are assured that the toy is not missing any of it's pieces. You're not always sure when you get them already built up.

Finally I want to touch on individual variances with single figures. Color variants being one of the drawing factors that makes R&L premiums so cool to collect. For any given set you can find each piece in all the plastic colors they were produced in. For some reason some sets were made in a superfluous number of colors (the Crazy Pirate series is reported to have 19 colors of plastic) while other sets had a minimal number of colors (in the AstroNit series there are 20 figures but only 8 colors). A few collectors have taken on the overwhelming task to attempt to collect each figure in all the known colors. For even a simple set like Daffy Dogs that would be 88 figures: 8 different Daffy Dogs, 11 known colors. For a set like Toolie Birds it is an astounding 144 figures.

So the high numbers of figures produced minus the large number of figures lost over time minus the number of figures being held in collections leads to a dwindling number of available toys for new collectors and thus the prices rise as demand for these toys grows. This is not to say that the recent high prices paid have been an accurate reflection of what the toys are worth.

I hate to resort to the old cliché that something is only worth what someone else is willing to pay for it but it's true. And it is especially true in something as dynamic and speculative as collecting old toys. I've covered some of the reasons prices are increasing for R&L premiums but the underlying theme is that collectors want them. In fact the more they get the greater the desire becomes to get more. And the net result is that prices increase and supply decreases.



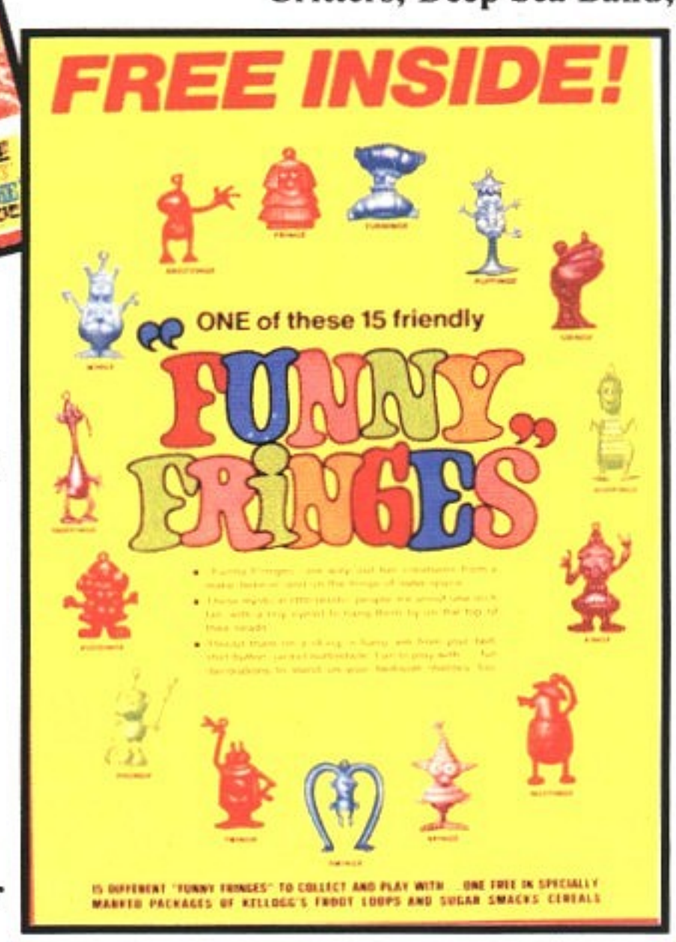
In fact, from a personal observation, the desire is greatest when a collector is closest to completing the set. Sometimes that last piece needed to complete a set is the hardest to locate. But in reality that last pieces is probably as common and abundant as the very first piece you added to the set and once you obtain it and complete the set it's significance will diminish greatly. So I urge collectors to be patient and you will persevere in your collecting goals. If something you need or want costs too much, it might be worth it, but just as likely there will be another one to come along soon at a price that is more reasonable.

As a guideline I'd like share my opinion of what R&L premium prices are for common and rare figures. Below are two categories of premiums showing what is abundant and what might be a little more difficult to locate. The relationship of prices is mostly dependent on these two factors: desirability and condition. The price guide is for "mint" condition loose figures and is in U.S. dollars.

Relative Price Guide

Common figures that are abundant - Swinging Pets; Daffy Dogs; Totem Pole; Stretch Pets; Society Zoo; Mobiles (Daffy Danglers): $3 to $8

Common figures that are harder to get - Crazy Animals; Crater Critters; Deep Sea Band; Vegetable Sports; Fringes; Toolie Birds; Crazy Pirates; Space-Nits; Ecology Buttons; Crazy Insects; UFOs: $10 - $18



Scarce sets - Living Zoo (Bobbing Heads); Camel Train; Zoo Choo Train; Wacky Walkers. These are the put-together series. On the frame they might be more expensive: $20 to $28

Scarce figures, rare sets: Starter Mushroom w/gun; Upsy-Downsy w/hat; King Crater w/crown; Rock Band figures; Japanese Crater Critters: $35, $50, $75

Cereal boxes with R&L premiums, cereal box back panels showing R&L toys - $50 and UP

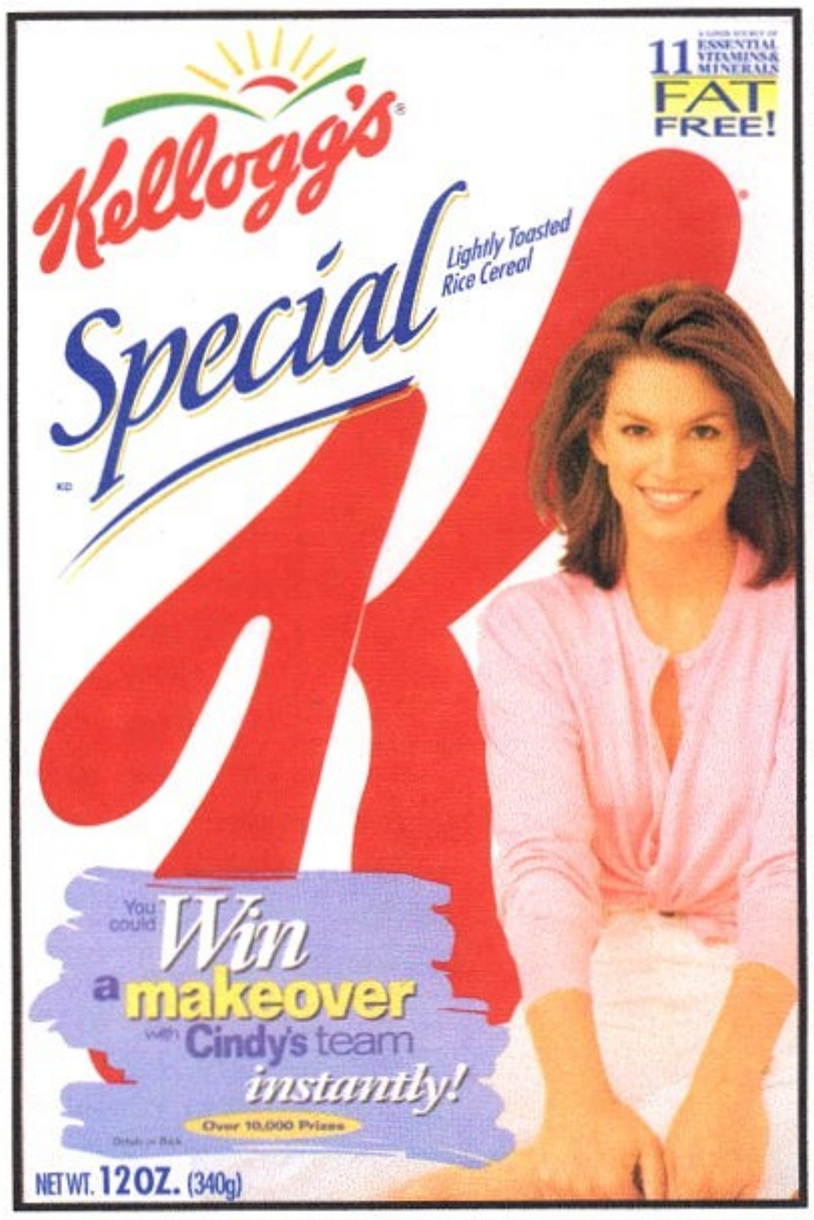
THE GNARLY NEW BY MIKAL

GNARLY NEW April 2000

CRYSTAL BALL

The future might be predicted so accurately that people suspect witchcraft! It might be suspected that the prediction was actually a self-fulfilling prophesy; it became so because it was said to be so... In mass media, the conglomerate packages the product, promotes the product, and reviews the product to its subscriber audience and then tally's the numbers in its own research firm, releasing the facts on its own "news" program.

Some physicists believe that there is a unified field surrounding humans, and we as a group respond in mass, once our species has been duly saturated with a single idea. That might explain the phenomenon of rock 'n roll, baseball, and Star Wars.



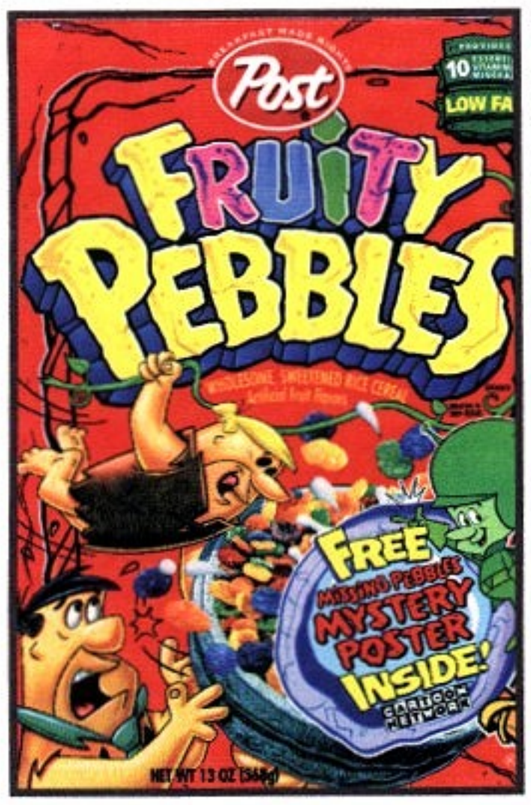
Cereal box collecting is destine to be one such phenomenon. If the explosion of enthusiasm for cereal box collecting is a result of Demonology, Media manipulation by The Freakie Magnet, or "The 100th Monkey Principle", it will evolve as a definitive "collectable" by every criteria of its being. Collectors of the early 21st Century who had the opportunity which we all share will be holding pop collectable "stock" every bit as dynamic as early 20th Century comic books and baseball cards!

It is with that faith that each season the following cereal boxes are offered for your consideration as the most qualified to emerge as the "best" boxes of our time... and for History to acknowledge the supernatural accuracy of these predictions...

#1 Kellogg's Special K Cindy Crawford Win A makeover with Cindy's Team! This box is an instant winner! Supermodel Cindy Crawford whose career as a Vogue covergirl, to Cover Girl model, to actress, TV hostess, Playboy model, etc. is a wonderful celebrity for cereal box collectors to embrace! Compare immediately to having a 70's Brooke Shields cereal box, or an 80's Madonna box! More than any celebrity, Cindy Crawford has represented the 90's with a determined professional career aimed at the next decade. It is one of the rare opportunities we've had as collectors to pick up a "celebrity" box since the early 90's NBC TV Kellogg's campaign. She's pretty, she's dynamic, and it's possible to own a copy of the Playboy magazine of her nudes as a companion piece to the box without offending too many lovers! Special K is a conservative boring adult cereal and this is the only example of it in my collection; better this than Grape Nuts. Go Cindy Go!

#2 Oreo O's Scooby Doo Mystery Poster in-pack Cartoon Network. Zoinks! LOVE Cartoon Network boxes! LOVE Classic cartoons on cereal boxes! LOVE cool in-packs with "magic" viewers! And a poster that can hang on the wall and endear itself into the hearts of kids the country over! LOVE weird cereals like Oreo O's that are sweet and disgusting and won't be around forever, or will be, but with different ever-changing logos! Either way! This is the second year for Oreo O's. Who'd have predicted it would make it THIS long!? Scooby Doo is a great reason to add it to the collection! Very fun!

#3 Corn Flakes Big Bird Sesame Street limited edition. As part of the beanie baby in-pack all over the Kellogg's cereals, Corn Flakes features a really fun picture of Big Bird, with the Sesame Street pole in the background. Normally I'd dismiss this as too "baby" for serious collectors, preferring to hold out for a higher "Muppets" movie tie-in, but there is a certain cultural impact that Sesame Street has which must be acknowledged. Elmo and Big Bird have been on Kix in the past, but never the feature as on the Corn Flakes box. This Corn Flakes limited edition is similar to the Disney Aladdin and Disney Goofy/Max editions of the early 90's. This makes it a nice component. Who knows how Europeans view Sesame Street? As the international collecting world becomes tighter, what we take for granted might be seen as quite unique. When I was invited to instruct a group of Japanese high school exchange students in one of America's popular songs, I chose the

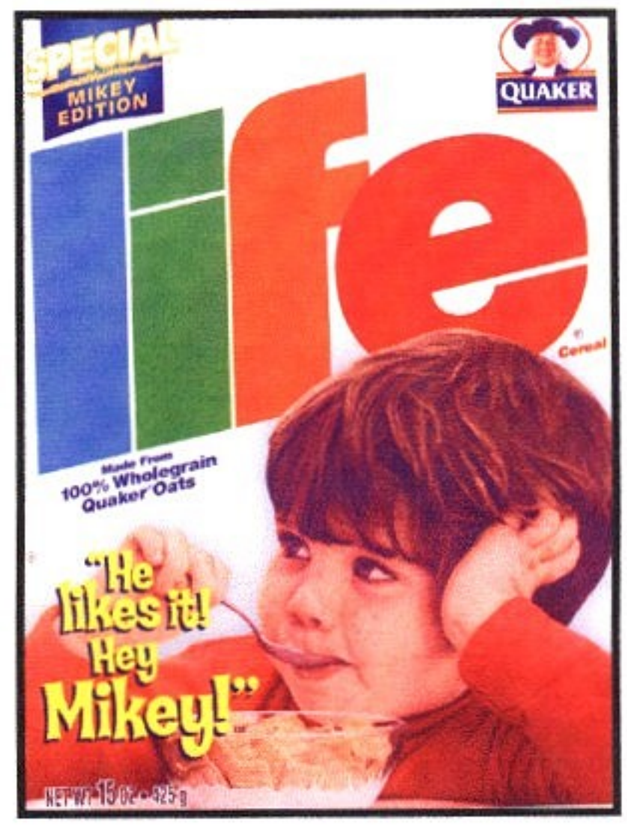


Sesame Street theme as a definitive song that nearly every American of my generation knows the words to (at least the first verse and chorus). For that, the Big Bird feature on Corn Flakes makes it a certain pop collectable!

#4 Fruity Pebbles Gazoo Missing Pebbles Mystery Poster in-pack! Cartoon Network Campaign 2000. A huge collage of Hanna-Barbera characters on the back of the box, and the poster in-pack (with "magic" lens!) Featuring GAZOO the little green space alien on the front of the box! One day someone will want ALL of the Pebbles variation boxes from 1987 to 20** and there will be dozens! But the most valuable will be the ones featuring GAZOO because certain collectors are wanting JUST Gazoo boxes... and they'll be harder to find... Great in pack, fun box! Always a pleasure to collect new Pebbles variation boxes!

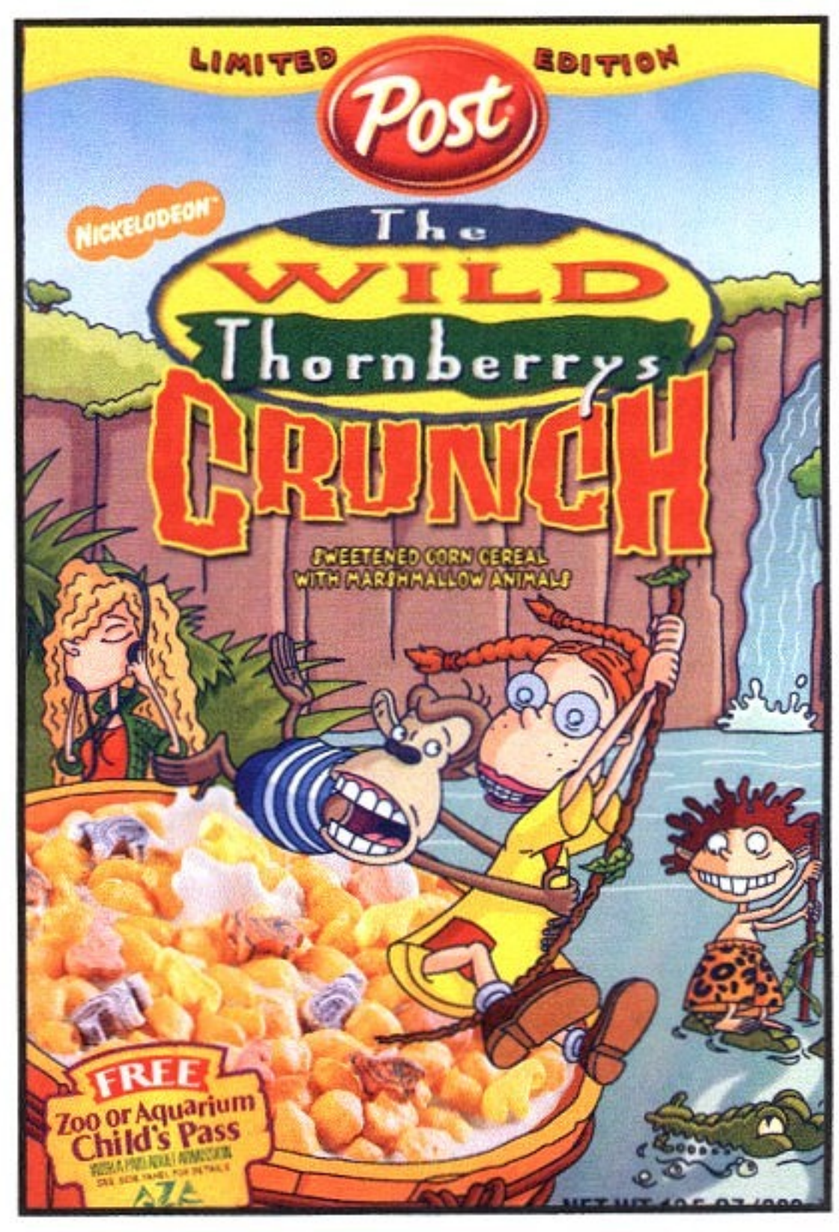
#5 LIFE "He Likes it! Hey Mikey" commemorative box! Photo of Mikey eating LIFE cereal on the front (both LIFE and Cinnamon LIFE). Collectable "Mikey" watch offer! The back of the box invites kids to "Check out the commercial on our website www.lifecereal.com" and who knows, maybe we will! I'd check out a Freakies commercial at freakies.com. This Mikey thing has been around for nearly 20 years! Does every American know who this kid is yet? Where's the Beef? Yo Quierro Taco Bell. Let's Get Mikey... I am BLESSED to have picked up the 1987 Mikey commemorative box with the "teen" Mikey where-is-he-now box which had a photo of the little Mikey, and also of Mikey "now" (1987). The box had a contemporary "card" in pack of Brooke Shields in a swimsuit... Mikey is a campaign that Quaker isn't going to let die! Subsequently, endearing it to a new generation, and "dating" the earlier variations for "time stamped" collectability. Well played.

#6 Frosted Cheerios First Pennies of the New Millennium and Golden Dollar coins promotion. Can you believe the hype for the Y2K Bug and Millennium madness! It hasn't been six months and those ideas are SO over! Undeniable is the coolness of coin collecting. One of my first hobbies as a child, from Pebbles dinosaur coins, to the newly minted 1974 nickel... to the bicentennial quarter!... This box commemorates as only a coin can, the millennium, and the new US money. Do you "believe" that the government has run out of Susan B Anthony dollars? One thing is for certain, the banks are OUT of golden dollars. With the new 50 states quarters, the golden dollars, and the millennium pennies, it's a fine time to be a coin collector and this makes a great cross over box!



Speaking of the millennium, the 2000 Marshmallow blasted Froot Loops box, which features marshmallow millennium 2's, has a variation with the shiny foil on the embossed box over Toucan Sam's head. Fun. And a new "Cherry Berry Swirls" in the regular Froot Loops has a conspicuously familiar (almost "freakie") Cherry Berry Swirl TREE in the background. Check 'em out!

Only time will tell if this particular list of wonderful contemporary cereal boxes has any one box of runaway merit! One thing is for sure, short of a crystal ball, the cereal boxes themselves will tell the collector LOOK AT ME! In a language that only that person can hear. With supernatural skill, influenced by the media, and in tune to the human condition... Happy collecting! -MIKAL

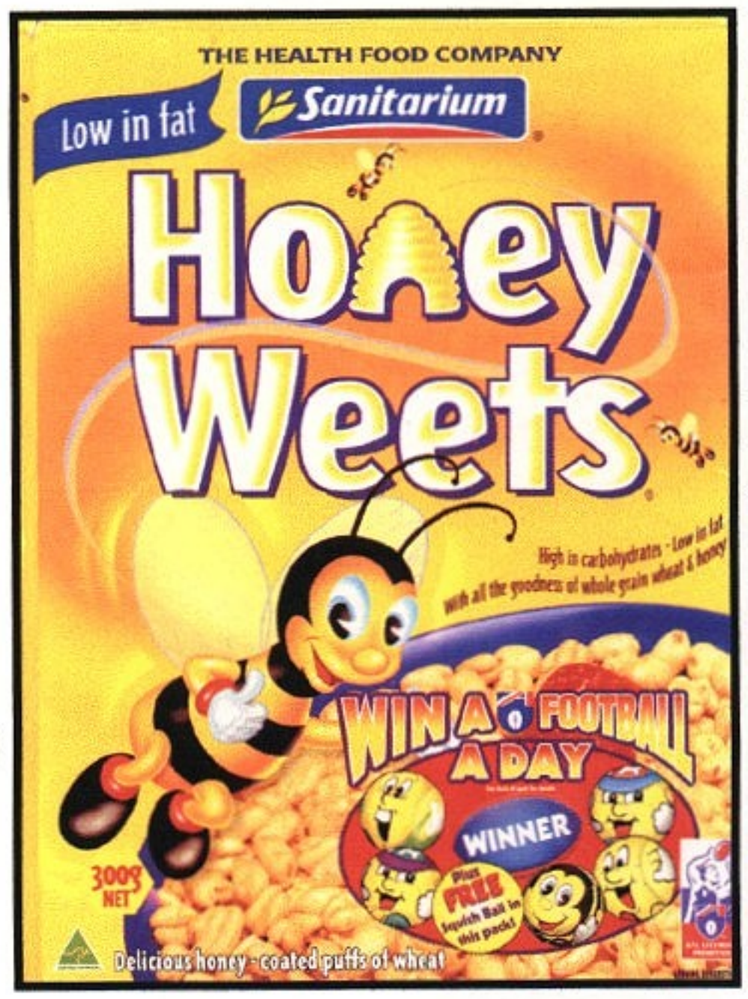


Honorable Mention: Wild Thornberrys Crunch!

DOWNUNDER'S WONDERS BY CRAIG HALL

Downunder's Wonders 1999 - Better Late Than Never

The year of 1999 began with high hopes, coming on the back of a good year in 1998. We had seen the great series of 5 Simpsons squirt rings, and also the 5 Babe-Pig in the City figures and 16 cards, Star Trek panels, Cricket CD Rom and cards, things were looking great for 1999. My research and inquiries at cereal companies for my book on premiums had revitalized the marketing guys' opinions on inserts. After the decade of 1985-1995, the big drought on premiums, we had a big 1998 year - Downunder was back!



So along came January, a quiet month with no premiums, but I wasn't worried, it's a quiet month in every respect. Then February and March sailed by, all was silent but for murmurs of eager collectors. OK I said, we've had three months go by, but so what. The accountant in me said it's a first quarter thing, and probably means something big is coming in April to June. When April turned to May the most optimistic were struggling - still nothing, I called an urgent meeting. It was so urgent, I was the only one there. After some hours of heated debate I closed the meeting concluding to give the cereal companies a little more time before I took the protest to the streets. Along came June and a series of 8 stickers "Powerlounge" appeared in Weetbix. They had weakened, my tactics had worked. Sitting back contented I waited for July and then I waited for August, then September - nothing. The year was almost over and we had virtually nothing in cereal. Ok, ok, no more Mr. Nice Guy. I grabbed the boxes of cereal from the cupboard, took them and emptied them into the toilet. The bowl quickly overflowed with cereal and piled around my feet. Without thinking, I angrily pressed the button. Water flowed as the flush system went to work. But the bowl quickly blocked, pressure built up and I was buried in an explosion of soggy cereal. Struggling for my life, gasping for air, I climbed on top of the empty cereal boxes and floated out of the toilet into my loungeroom. As I floated past the TV, an ad was announcing a new toy in Sanitarium Corn Flakes, due in October. With the year almost over, we had a breakthrough and premiums flowed thick and fast. October produced Sanitarium squish balls. A set of 5 printed character baseballs, about 1 ½ inches in diameter with funny faces. Made of cotton and stuffed with foam rubber, they weren't Tooly Birds, but they were a start. If you found a mini-football in the box you won an Aussie rules football autographed by the player of your choice. November gave us a series of 20 tattoos by Nickelodeon in Kellogg's. It is one of those card series that are sealed and you need to break the perforation to see which card it is, and once you do, the card is no longer mint. So you don't know when you have the full set. In December they blew us away with a connector set. One of those plastic construction sets that can make a variety of toys from the one lot of pieces. A box of 121 pieces to make a sand windsailer, and a second of 159 pieces to make a helicopter. Each was attached to the top of a Weetbix box by shrinkwrap and cost an extra $4 on top of the regular cereal price, but in the toy shop the sets are worth $50. These two particular items are not available in the shops, and the cereal boxes sold out nationally in 2 days! I think a lot of the people bought them as Christmas presents, they were such a bargain. This means a lot of cereal collectors will have missed out.

The marketing guys tell me that the cereal box is now recognized as a powerful advertising medium as it has such high market penetration, reaching virtually every house. Our December release was one of a new style of co-promotion where the cereal company provides the printed box and some other firm provides the insert or attachment. This is why a lot of stuff is in connection with blockbuster movies.

Anyway, we're still going strong down here and the rumor is that the 2000 Olympics is going to produce a flood of cereal premiums throughout 2000 - OH YEAH!

FREE INSIDE

STILL BUYING FREAKIES! Looking for some fun dots and mini magnets. Have stuff to trade including boats, rubber figures, plastic figures, magnets, patches, cars, etc. Also looking for the following original Daffy Dogs to complete my set: boxer and Chihuahua. Kevin Meisner, 860-848-2050. Meisner65@aol.com

WANTED: FRIENDS AND COLLECTORS to share information (and maybe toys) about the R&L Company & Kellogg's premiums in the 60's & 70's. Toolie Birds, Crater Critters, Funny Fringes, Daffy Dogs, etc. astronit@ecentral.com or astronit@earthlink.net. Visit my website: http://members.tripod.com/Astronit/RLco.html

WANTED:1960S BOSCO BOSCONAUTS PLUSH DOLLS and spring based plastic figures; Marky Maypo T-shirt and fan club kit. Roland Coover, 1537 E. Strasburg Rd, West Chester, PA 19380-6380 email:rlcoover@aol.com

PAYING $500-$800 EACH FOR THE FOLLOWING ORIGINAL FREAKIES CEREAL BOXES: Poster Offer box, Comic book inside box, Bike Flag Fruity Freakies box, Fruithat Fruity Freakies box and Cocoa Freakies box. Paying $200 and up for others. Contact David at 773/244-2942 or spoonley@enteract.com. Visit my Website of Freakies boxes at www.enteract.com/~chemlesa/dave/home.htm

DESPERATELY SEEKING FLAKE #6, the western issue. Buy or trade. Bob Jordan, 2970 Springfield, MO 65810. BobJordan@mail.smsu.edu

WANTED TO BUY: ALFIE WIGGLE FIGURE, WILMA THE WHALE PLUSH FIGURE, Casper the Ghost milkglass cereal bowl, Canadian Hanna-Barbera cereal figures, Rocky and Bullwinkle flicker rings. Jim Rash, 135 Alder Avenue, Egg Harbor Twp, N.J. 08234 phone (609)-646-4125.

WANTED -- TENNESSEE TUXEDO & CHUMLEY ITEMS; Sugar Bear; Smedley; Crunchberry Beast; any other '60s-'80s cereal mascot items; send me your sales lists: Brandon Coker, 110 Appaloosa Run, Liberty Hill, TX 78642 coker38@earthlink.net

CAP'N CRUNCH WANTED - FOREIGN BOXES AND PREMIUMS, Wiggle figures, 60's & 70's boxes, Store display & Inhouse items, Introductory Sample box, Animation Art. Chris Serratore, 218 Main Street, Ambler, PA 19002. 215-628-3213. funface@toystuff.com

WANTED: MPC DINOSAURS - moschops only! Also Screaming Yellow Zonkers and Toolie Bird Screwdriver. Thanks - Mike Howlett, 101 Spring Street, Cambridge, MA 02141. (617) 661-0435.

WANTED! 60'S & 70'S TOYS, GAMES, MODEL KITS, CEREAL BOXES & PREMIUMS, including Quisp, Quake, Cap'n Crunch, Freakies, Monster Cereals, etc! Andy Caro, 2444 Soundview Drive, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110. 206-842-0711. bubbleclub@aol.com

POST BIG AWARDS WANTED: LOOSE OR MIP, MOST DESIGNS AND COLORS, especially Real Cool and Big Cheese. Also a photocopy or scan of any Big Awards box back. Mark Best, Banta 108, Bloomington, IN 47408. mbest@indiana.edu

LOOKING FOR "FRUIT BRUTE" VINYL DOLL MIB! Paying $380.00! Kentax Henmi 211-31 Chitose,Takatuku Kawasaki,Kanagawa 2130022 Japan

BUY-SELL-TRADE

I have many original boxes and lasers-mainly 60-70's. Quisp, Quake, Freakies, Pebbles, Grapefellow, Monsters, Pink Panther, etc. I buy, sell and trade original boxes and quality laser copies.

Lasers 14.99 each email for full laser list. Robb - (715)394-5702 or toygalaxy1@aol.com

Inside you'll find one 2½"x 5" Freakie comic. Free.
(That means you get it for nothing.)